### WAKEMAN'S TRAVELS

Home of British Army Veterans Beside the Thames.

### AMONG OLD CHELSEA PENSIONERS.

Their Daily Lives Scenes in Ward Rooms, Chapel and Hall-Interesting Traditions and Reminiscences The Belief that Nell Gwynne Had All to do With Founding the Hospital-Two Romantic Stones.

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Epicial Corres ondence of the Inchigeneer.
LONDON, August 1.—In olden times discharged and destitute veterans of the British army wandered from door to door, usually from top room door to door, and secured food and drink by exhibiting their scars or spinning delectable yarns for the entertainment of any who might bestow charity upon them. They could also knock at the doors of monastic houses with the assurance of receiving bread and ale and lodging for the night.

After the Restoration their condition was a scandal to King Charles II, and the country. Authorities differ not only widely but vituperously as to the origin of practical effort for their betterment. Some hold that the English were ploued into action through the establishment by Louis XIV, of the Instillers in Paris as a retreat for French version. Invalides in Paris as a retreat for French veterans. There is record that as early as 1666 a schome for an infirmary for disabled English sailors had been submitted to Pepys, as Cierk of Admiralty. Others contest that the ascound Charles had a lazy sort of design to house and comfort the ragged old veterans who had been loyal to his father before the latter had lost his kingly head.

But sometimes tradition has longer legs than history. British people will never cause believing the tradition that rough, kind bearied Nell Gwynne had all to do with the founding of Chelsea hospital for British pensioners. There

all to do with the lounding of Chessea hospital for British pensioners. There are two pretty stories of how it finally came about that an army of savage old critics and looncelasts can never dis-

came about that an army of savage old critics and iconoclasts can never disparage among the British masses.

One is that one day Nell was sitting with Charles in her summer house at Cholece, one of whose windows overlooked the fine meadows surrounding King James' college, when the paymaster of the forces ontered, and thosubject of the projected hospital and the difficulty of finding a proper site was resumed. "Your majesty could not do better," said Sir Stophen Fox, "than give up for the purpose your recent purchase from the royal society." This comprised King James' college and grounds which had just been bought as a gift to Nell at a cost of thirteen—hundred pounds. "Tis well thought of," replied the king, casting his eye over the beautiful plot of ground. "You shall have it;" but recollecting himself, he instantly added, "Odeso! I forgot—I have already given this land to Nell here." "Have you so, Charles?" exclaimed Nell gaily; then I will Februr it to you again for so good a purpose." The offer was accepted, had Nell was transferred to a mansion built for hee in Pall Mall by the king.

ANOTHER VERSION. Another more romantic version is that one day pretty Nell was riding in the king's gilded coach, and being most disconsolate the king rallied her, when she confessed that her distress was owing to the following dream?

Themes embankment, and at once are within a charmed and charming region. Almost within a stone's throw of the hospital grounds have tarried, or lived or died, hundreds famous in history, literature and art. Smollet came here to live in retirement, in 1750, in a house once owned by Henry VIII. Sir Thomas More's black memorial slab is in Cheisea Old Church; Lady Dacre. Lady Jane Cheyne and the Duches of Narihumberland, three of Cheleea's grand ladies, lie beneath monuments within the church; while Charles, George and Henry Kingsley once lived in the rectory with their father, who had received the "living" from Lord Cardogan.

In Cheyne Walk lived Turner, the painter; and in Cheyne Row lived George Eliot and rurged old Carlyle. Queen Elizabeth need to visit the Earl of Shrowshury at Shrewshury House, just back of Cheyne Walk; and doughty old famuel Johnson, who thought he could mold China as well at make a dictionary, for a long time came here care day to the old Cheises china works, at the corner of Lawrence street and Justice walk, his faithful house-

keeper trudging after him with a huge basket containing his daily food.

The poet George Herbert dwelt in this neighborhood; Rosetti lived and sang here amids this garden of flowers; and at a little barber shop and coffee house, "Don Saltero's" it was called, in Cheyne Walk, Richard Cromwell Stoele and Addison and Benjamin Franklin, who worked in a printing shop in Bartholomew Close, came to got shaved and to lotter over their coffee, "whore the Literati then sat in council."

THE OLD MEN IN RED.

THE OLD MEN IN RED,

Indeed a grand, good, aweet book could be written about the folk who have loved and known old Chelsea

have loved and known old Chelsea whom we have known and loved for what they did for the world. Hauntering on through the quaint streets with their ancient and picturesque mansions, hosts of the silent great will throng about you. But now and then your delightful memories will be not unpleasantly broken in upon by the appearance of some shriveled old man, often with a cane or a crutch and always in flaming red.

You will find these venerable old fellows in red, who become more frequent as you near the Hospital, either moody, contemplative and contemplature, with the corners of their mouths drawn in deep lines and their pully lower lips in a sort of endless tremulous activity of scornful repartee or objurgation, or with bright, popeeyed looks of garrulousness and good greeting. All have pipes in their mouths, and all hold them there with a ferocious kind of grasp, as though whatever else they might lose, the tipe was the one good friend of old that should never be torn from thom without a mighty struggle.

grasp, as though whatever each copy might lose, the nipe was the one good friend of old that should never be torn from them without a mighty struggle. Many an odd little study you will find among these castankarous past age heroes in the quiet streets of Chelsea. Chelsea would hardly be Chelsea without them. Straggling along its thoroughfares, sitting bent and silent on stanny benches, leaning grainst fountains, vases and statues, risting as composedly as house owners on house steps and vestibules, or stumping along with orders to this and that servant, as if long habit had given them acquired supervisory rights over the affairs of residents, they irresistibly suggest a bevy of creaking cockafoes turned lose in park and garden, each one harping upon some fancied grievance or delight. Many are the sing little public houses hard by, worse luck to the British citizen and pensioner! and you will find it easy enough to make friendships with these old fellows, who have little to do and much to remember while awaiting the last long muster. It would be sorely ungracious in you not to cement an acquaintanceship of this sort with a little purchase of "backy," and several purchases of "four ale, even though an unrelenting prohibitionist at home. Thus you will learn marvelous things of British valor afield, all, of course, in the old days when, different from now, fighting was fighting in deed. You will secure a willing and taleful guide to Chelsea hospital. And above all you will searn how a British pensioners' pride in his own and his country's achievements may be mingled, in the same breath, with his own country's achievements may be min-gled, in the same breath, with his own everlasting discontent and contempt.

AN IMPOSING STRUCTURE.

You will find Chelsea hospital a dark and imposing structure, possessing that indefinable gloomy grandeur which its builder, Sir Christopher Wren, gave as a marked characteristic to all his archi-tectural creations. Indeed one may well say Wren seems to stare at you trom out the facades of the great Lon-den buildings. But the grounds are

well say Wren seems to stare at you from out the facades of the great London buildings. But the grounds are wide and ample, and the noblest frees in London everywhere flank the fine old building, far enough away to give floods of sunshine in the courts and large parade grounds between the hospital and the Thames embankment. The building comprises three huge courts, the largest facing the south, the Thames and the masses of toliage of Battersea Park, across the river.

The wings of the great southern court are 365 feet long and are forty feet wide. In these are found the pensioners' wards. Each one is about 200 feet in length. Twenty-six compartments are situated on each side of a division partition running along the center of each ward. These partitions are open at each end, where the ward officers have rooms; and as the pensioners' compartments or rooms face the outer walls, which are provided with huge, closely-clustered windows, each ward in itself provides about 500 lineal feast of splendidly lighted and ventilated promerade floor, for use during inclement weather.

of the officers appropriating all the joints of mutton while leaving them but the ribs and briskets, they stoutly assert that "Every sheep killed for Chelesea has nine breasties!" But I believe they are, on the whole, very comfortable and considerately treated, and fully as well served and cared for as are the veterans of our own Soldiers' Homes.

The most interesting places in Chelesea Hospital are the ward rooms, the kitchen when the noon day meal is nearly resdy, the chapel and the great Hall. In the ward rooms I discovered one chipper old fellow who will be 92 years old in October. He is William Merrill, late of the 31st Foot; is a native of Bedforeshire; enlisted in 1819; and has seen over forty years of actual service. My companion said he was the "siyest rogue and joker in No. 10 ward. Gay old William also has the record of countless filtrations over the area railings of Chelsea's mansions. Carlyle chased him all the way back to the Hospital one day for too vigorous bandinaze with the serving-maids of the philosopher's family in Cheyne Row.

Any Sunday afternoon you may see

How.

Any Sunday afternoon you may see 300 or 400 of these grazzled pensioners at chapel. They are not very reverential, and are uneasy as children in the pews. They shuffle their feet, get into complications with their wooden legs, canes and crutches, and there is much snuffling, clearing of throats and hard astimate breathing. But Herkomer's great painting does not exaggerate the pathos of their collective and individual aspect. So many of these white heads and hattle-scarred, bent frames together look very pitiful indeed when all are bowed and still at time of prayer and benediction.

very pitital indeed when all are bowed and still at time of prayer and benediction.

The great hall is a spacious, lofty paneled room in which are famous frescoes and paintings, many tattered battle fings, a raised dias for the queen, a good library, many newspapers and periodicals, and fine benches and tables where the pensioners may come and fight their battles over at draughts and chess. Wellington lay in state here and Nell Gwynne is not forgotion. In one corner of the huge party allegorical fresco she is depicted in her first and most honest vocation, a London orange girl. What interested me most in the great hall was a large glass case of medals, hundreds upon hundreds of them, stained and grimy, attached to varicolored ribbons—the magenta plain for good conduct; magenta and yellow stripes for heroes in China; rose red for special valor in Turkey; the blue and yellow stripes recalling the horrors of Crimea; and many others of whose significance I was ignorant. I asked my companion how so many came to be collected here.

"Well," he replied, in a scared sort of a way, finged with a bravado that had pathos in it, "you see when "Little Joe" and Harry McDuh (the old fifer and drummer of Chelsea) heads a procession here—there's a hundred 'o that sort a year—an' the old boy in the box that's booked for Brompton (the present burying-ground of Chelsea) 'aven't got na kin to claim 'em, the dec'rations all go in 'ere!" Engas L. Wakeman.

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